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ABSTRACT

This paper is intended to help program developers to initiate or refine school-based, self-contained delinquency prevention programs. These programs are limited, short-term efforts to minimize delinquent behavior among youth by creating school situations in which the factors that contribute to delinquent behavior are reduced. Designed as an accompanying document to a monograph that reviews theory, research, principles, strategies, and options concerning delinquency prevention, the paper describes desirable program features and suggests activities through which those strategies and principles can be applied. Following an introductory section, chapter 2 presents an overview of self-contained delinquency prevention programs and their benefits; compares such programs with larger scale efforts for selective organizational change; and explains why the focus is on schools. Chapter 3 describes program features in detail, and refers to the principles and strategies upon which they are based. The features discussed include content and activities, participants, program routine, setting, and evaluation. Finally, chapter 4 explains how the principles and strategies apply to tasks and activities in a sequence of implementation steps, and contains recommendations for initially assessing prospects for a program, obtaining support, and developing a plan of action. (Author/MJL)

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A GUIDE FOR DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS BASED IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES: A WORKING PAPER

PREPARED FOR:

THE OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The concept of self-contained programs was developed and described in Delinquency Prevention: Theories and Strategies, a monograph that contains a review of contemporary theory and research findings, principles, strategies, and options for delinquency prevention. As a supplement to that monograph, this paper is intended to help program developers initiate or refine such a program and plan a systematic sequence of activities for program development and implementation. State level personnel may find guidance here when they are deciding how to apply their resources most productively toward delinquency prevention efforts.

Self-contained programs are short-term efforts on a limited scale directed toward a distinct segment of the youth population. They should not be confused with traditional direct-service programs that focus on correcting or improving features of an individual youth. Self-contained programs are designed to provide immediate benefits to the youth participants by creating a social situation that is likely to limit their participation in delinquent behavior.

For youth, schools are highly influential institutions. Many of the school processes that prepare young people for adulthood can also produce delinquent behavior, and they regularly seem to do so. Some factors that possibly contribute to delinquent behavior are the values emphasized in schools, the perceived irrelevance of curricula to youth situations and to worthwhile and basic pursuits, and school sorting procedures such as tracking, evaluation, and grading. Self-contained programs are intended to create school situations in which such factors are reduced, and at the same time to encourage law-abiding behavior.

1.1 Purposes of the Paper

By presenting desirable program features and by suggesting a sequence of activities through which the principles and options in Delinquency Prevention: Theories and Strategies can be applied, this paper is intended to support the implementation of self-contained delinquency prevention programs based in schools. Material contained in the larger volume is the basis for the program features and activities described here. A substantial body of contemporary research and theoretical work supports the belief that this combination of program elements will be effective in reducing delinquent behavior among participants. The implementation sequence includes mechanisms both for realizing the prevention principles and for minimizing the slippage between program design and actual practice. The paper should be used in conjunction with the larger volume.

1.2 Intended Audiences and Uses of the Information

State and local program designers and those who provide them with information can use this material to develop new programs, assess current opportunities, formulate sequential action steps, and improve existing programs.

Anyone who exerts even a modest influence on local school-based programs is encouraged to become familiar with the elements presented here and the rationale behind them.

State agency representatives, particularly SPA personnel, will find pointers in this paper for judging the worth of proposed and existing programs. The material included here can help to assess what the potential of a program on the drawing board will be when it becomes fully implemented, as well as the prospects for obtaining more than token implementation at a given site with given personnel and resources. This paper can also serve as a resource when generating programs and preparing technical assistance materials to support local personnel.

In addition, state-level personnel in the educational system can use this material to assess prospective programs in particular schools and to recruit support for principals and others who are in favor of these programs.

1.3 Scope of the Paper

This paper does not offer day-by-day programs or course outlines, nor does it provide a formula that can be followed mechanically to develop a program. Rather, it attempts to anticipate the probable stages of work; to identify the problems, issues, and tasks that these stages will present; and to suggest approaches to them. Applying these pointers will require considerable creativity on the part of the reader.

With respect to management, planning, negotiating, and allocating resources, this paper considers only those problems peculiar to the approach and programs recommended. For general administrative strategies that apply to a wide range of endeavors, other sources should be consulted.

This is a working paper. The ideas here are the result of substantial field experience and a broad review of literature, but they will need continual refinement. The suggestions and evaluations presented here are tentative. Applying them will produce further insights which will become the basis for ongoing modification and correction.

Sometimes program recommendations are not implemented for reasons other than resistance to change. Two situations can exist, depending on the level of generality of the ideas that are presented. When a presentation is too general, the contrast between proposed and existing programs is unclear. For example, personnel from almost all schools feel that they are doing something to make learning more humanistic and to improve their school's climate. They may respond to a generalized recommendation by agreeing and then simply doing more of what they are already doing without trying anything new. On the other hand, when a presentation is too specific, any attempt to implement the program is abandoned. This results when personnel try to duplicate every detail of a "model program" that might have worked quite successfully in another setting but needs to be tailored to their school's environment. They

may reject not only the model but also the principles behind it. In some cases, the program will survive in name only, taking a form that bears little similarity either to the original program or to any known principles of delinquency prevention.

The presentation should be general enough to require adaptation of the principles to local conditions, but specific enough to avoid the response, "We're already doing that." To this end, we have included recommendations for specific school environments, principles to follow in designing a specific school-based delinquency prevention program, and suggestions for implementing it without sacrificing the integrity of the principles.

This is not a step-by-step "how to" manual, and it does not contain prepackaged programs or models. References to activities of existing programs appear solely for the purpose of illustrating principles. Transplanting specific activities to new settings is not recommended.

1.4 Arrangement of the Paper

Chapter Two presents an overview of self-contained delinquency programs and their intended benefits, contrasts their value with that of larger scale efforts for selective organizational change, and explains why the focus is on schools. Chapter Three describes program features, in more detail, with reference to the principles and strategies upon which they are based. The features discussed are content and activities, participants, program routines, setting, and evaluation. Chapter Four explains how the principles and strategies apply to tasks and activities in a sequence of implementation steps. Chapter Four also contains recommendations for initially assessing the prospects for a program, obtaining support for it, and developing a plan of action to launch the program. While Chapter Three describes what a self-contained program consists of, Chapter Four explains how to bring it about.

2. CHAPTER TWO: OVERVIEW OF SELF-CONTAINED PROGRAMS

The self-contained programs described here are relatively short term efforts designed to provide selected population segments of youth with opportunities to achieve social legitimacy. Social legitimacy refers to the perception of youth by themselves and by others as useful, competent, belonging, and influential. Their social environment provides some young persons with fewer opportunities than others to feel useful, to demonstrate competence, to belong, and to exert influence over matters that affect their lives. One corrective course is to provide additional avenues to legitimacy for the categories of youth who need them the most. Adding a self-contained program in a school is one way of doing this. Although one objective of this type of program is to reduce delinquent behavior by the participants, a program that is properly designed and carried out offers other benefits as well.

2.1 Self-Contained Programs Compared with Selective Organizational Change

Both the school-based, self-contained programs described here and selective changes in school organization emphasize preventing delinquency by providing more opportunities for students to achieve legitimacy. Both approaches are intended to reduce delinquency-producing forces and to encourage law-abiding behavior in schools. The selective organizational changes in schools recommended are a variety of adjustments in mainstream policies and practices of an entire school, including:

- Adjustments in the ways values are described and emphasized in schools by reducing the emphasis on competition and increasing the emphasis on participation in cooperative endeavors; by decreasing the emphasis on a narrow group of high-status work occupations and by promoting a more balanced attitude regarding the value of the variety of occupations necessary to society; by deemphasizing the value of narrow academic skills and pursuits and by encouraging a more positive emphasis on practical skills, work, and participation in community affairs.

- Adjustments in curriculum, by providing more organized educational support for the study and practice of work, for the study of and involvement in community affairs, and for the mastery of practical competencies needed by all.

- Adjustments in the classification and sorting of students -- which affect bonding, opportunity, and labeling -- by changing school tracking policies and practices, by reorganizing the system of prerequisites, and by removing academic performance as an entrance criterion for extracurricular activities. Some of these sorting practices are aggravated by often unintended but nevertheless systematic reactions to artifacts of class, race, and ethnicity.

- Adjustments in school governance, by expanding student participation as planners, developers, instructors, aides, and in other responsible roles in the school and by insuring that systems of discipline are legitimate, fair, consistent, and clear and are perceived as such.

Recommendations for establishing self-contained delinquency prevention programs in schools also recognize potential harm in the ways in which values are emphasized, in curricula, in classification and sorting procedures, and in school governance policies. In the absence of schoolwide adjustments of these factors, the self-contained program is an attempt to counteract their delinquency-producing impact for some students. Instead of altering the existing school environment, the self-contained program supplements it by providing a temporary setting in which these elements are modified. The logic is that the stake in law-abiding behavior and other supports for good conduct that may be missing or weak in the mainstream school experience will be supplied for some by the self-contained program.

The distinction between a self-contained delinquency prevention program and selective organizational change is in many ways one of degree. The contrast is not between two completely different approaches, but rather between polar extremes along a continuum. Determining which designation best describes any given effort requires the answers to the following four questions.

First, who actually conducts the effort? Hiring additional staff members or bringing in outside specialists to run a program diminishes the prospects for permanent organizational change. The experience of outsiders working in a school, no matter how capable they are in running a special program, is less likely to affect other parts of the organization than is the experience of insiders. The use of outside people is one mark of a self-contained program; however, it is recommended only as a last resort.

Second, what resources support the effort? With notable exceptions, self-contained programs tend to rely on grants and other sources of outside funding, while selective organizational change usually does not. In general, the more an effort depends on outside resources, the less likely it is to survive when the funding or other support runs out. For this reason, the

most durable efforts are those for which support comes from internal resources. Heavy reliance on outside funding is another characteristic of many self-contained programs. Again, it is recommended only when prospects for internal support are poor.

Third, for what length of time are school personnel committed to the effort? Self-contained programs are relatively short-term efforts; time commitments of a semester or two may be suitable for certain programs of the type described here. In contrast, selective organizational change is by definition a long-term undertaking; it does not imply a temporary change in policy. Most organizational change is incremental, and many effects are not apparent in the span of a single school year. For self-contained programs, initial time commitments should be adequate for design, full implementation, and assessment of process and outcomes. The assessments should facilitate long-term commitments to efforts that fall closer to the selective organizational change end of the continuum.

Fourth, how much space does the effort have? This aspect refers to both the physical facilities and the number of hours per week alloted to the effort. Self-contained programs typically have specific boundaries with respect to time and place, while selective organizational change efforts focus on elements that affect an entire school setting. Placing boundaries around a program carries risks. For example, locating a self-contained program next to the furnace room in the school basement will make it unobstrusive, but at the same time this location may destroy the prospects for subsequent organizational change, as well as the promise of immediate benefits for those in the program.

In each of the four questions just discussed, the optional recommendation is not for self-contained programs in their purest form. Programs holding the greatest promise are:

- Those that are run by insiders rather than outsiders;
- Those that are maintained through existing organizational resources rather than outside funding;
- Those that have commitments from school personnel over a substantial span of time; and
- Those whose location and hours do not set them apart dramatically from mainstream school activities.

Acceptance in some schools will require compromising on one or more of these points; for example, no program may be possible without the support of a grant. However, anyone wishing to implement an effective self-contained delinquency prevention program should resist undue compromise. At some point, the effort should be abandoned altogether rather than be allowed to become so diluted that the contemplated program is no better (or possibly worse) than

no program at all. Figure 2-1 depicts the trade-offs between ease of implementation and high impact. In an optimal program each characteristic falls as close as possible to the right side of the continum.

2.2 Intended Benefits of Self-Contained Delinquency Prevention Program based in Schools

2.2.1 Reduction of Delinquent Behavior

By applying key principles drawn from a solid body of theory and empirical evidence, self-contained delinquency prevention programs are intended to reduce delinquent behavior. Comtemporary theories of delinquency, well-supported by research, point to the organized social environment as the primary influence in both delinquent and law-abiding behavior. That is, certain features of the organization of schools, of work, of neighborhood and community affairs, and of families contribute systematically to delinquent behavior. These theories discussed more fully in Delinquency Prevention: Theories and Strategies, are outlined below.

- Bonding and Control Theories--According to bonding and control theories, most people stay out of trouble most of the time because they are bonded to conventional norms of society through their affiliations at home, at school, in the workplace, and at church. So long as some of these ties are strong, an individual is likely to conform to the rules. Hirschi described four control processes that support conformity:

  -- *Commitment* refers to a person's having interests that misconduct would jeopardize, a stake in conventional activities that could be lost as a result of rule-breaking. The stake includes both a desirable position at present and a realistic promise of such positions in the near future.

  -- A second control process is *attachment* to other people; to violate a norm is to violate the wishes and expectations of others; a low level of attachment makes violation more likely.

  -- *Involvement* in conventional activities refers to one's present participation and investment of time and energy in the activity. Only some involvements serve as controls on behavior. Hischi found time spent watching television, engaging in sports, and reading magazines to be unrelated to delinquent behavior, while

Extreme form of self-contained programs: easiest to implement, but promising least impact--		Selective organizational change: most difficult to implement, but promising greatest impact--
Run entirely by persons from outside the school	- - -	Run entirely by regular school personnel
Supported entirely by grants or other outside resources	- - -	Supported entirely by existing internal resource
Time commitment of one semester or less	- - -	Time Commitment unlimited
Narrowly bounded physical facilities and hours	- - -	Unbounded physical facilities and hours, permeating the school setting

Figure 2-1. Program Characteristics Affecting Ease of Implementation and Level of Impact

time spent doing homework was associated with lower delinquency, even when there were controls for classroom grades.

-- The fourth control process is *belief* in the moral validity of social rules. There is a strong connection between commitment and involvement at home and at school and respect for the law.

Note that these arguments are not nearly as simple as implied in the saying, "the Devil finds work for idle hands"; simply keeping young people busy has not been shown to reduce delinquent behavior. The fundamental issue is whether an organized activity provides a social stake, a desirable position that could be lost and that is the basis for involvement, for attachment to others, and for belief in the moral validity of prevailing rules.

- Strain and Opportunity Theories--These theories hold that, in our society, the same goals tend to be held out to everyone as desirable. This becomes a problem because legitimate avenues for achieving those goals are not equally open to all. The combination of equality of goals and inequality of opportunity regularly makes it impossible for some segments of the population to play by the rules and still get what everybody wants. As a consequence, some people use illegitimate means to achieve these goals. Some may reject both the goals and the means and retreat socially, either by removing themselves physically, or by using alcohol or drugs. Others may engage in ritual conformity, accepting the means but rejecting or abandoning the goals, while still others may rebel, rejecting both the goals and the means and substituting new ones in their places. Many of these responses are called "delinquency."

- Labeling Theory--The labeling theory explains how using negative or derogatory descriptions of individuals affects their situation and their behavior. Some people, by virtue of race, class, or ethnicity, may be particularly subject to such labeling. The usual process is for negative assessments of acts (Johnny or Janie broke a window) to become negative descriptions of persons (Janie or Johnny is a delinquent). Others begins to react to the label as much as to the actual behavior of the person labeled; trouble

> is expected, not productivity and opportunities for bonding to conventional activities; and actors are diminished. Often the labeled person will behave in accordance with the label and will accept the label as his self-image. Thus delinquent behavior becomes more probable.

Self-contained delinquency prevention programs are intended to reduce delinquent behavior (a) by increasing opportunities for bonding and commitment to conventional lines of action, (b) by providing closer correspondence between aspirations and the legitimate means of attaining them, (c) by increasing interaction between youth and groups supporting law-abiding behavior, and (d) by reducing negative labeling or by relabeling participants positively. A useful concept that ties all of these goals together is that of social legitimacy, the chance for a youth to be--and to to seen as--useful, competent, belonging, and influential. In brief, these programs are intended to create school situations for selected students that reduce delinquency-producing forces and support law-abiding behavior.

2.2.2 Other Positive Benefits to Youth

In addition to reducing delinquency, these self-contained delinquency prevention programs are designed to convey immediate positive benefits to the youths who participate in them. Current evidence indicates that the same blocked opportunites that contribute to delinquent behavior produce alternative responses such as low productivity in school and truancy. By providing youth with new opportunities and by engaging participants in attractive pursuits, the programs promise favorable development for all involved, even those who would not have become delinquent in any event.

The positive benefits of the programs should extend beyond the school setting. As described later in this paper, recommendations include establishing the worth of the program and its participants in the larger community and conveying favorable information about participants to their parents and other important adults they know. All of these efforts enhance the potential for delinquency prevention, as well as for positive youth development in a more general sense.

2.2.3 Refinement of Approach

The operation of self-contained programs is intended to be the basis for improving the approach. The design should provide for feedback on the effectiveness of various elements of the programs. Subsequent programs in a given school can at least expand the more effective elements and curtail the less effective ones. Sharing

this feedback with individuals in other programs will permit refining and correcting the overall approach for all who intend to use it in the future. What is intended here is modification of principles and general program guidelines, not the development of better prepackaged models to be adopted blindly. In short, running a program is the only way to learn how to apply these ideas better. This is the experimental aspect of the approach.

2.2.4 Speed and Base of Implementation

Another benefit of self-contained programs lies in the speed and ease with which they can be implemented, in comparison to selective organizational change. Although selective change in the school organization is the most direct route to the desired result, many situations will not permit it. A wish for a quick response to pressing problems and apprehension over a disruption in routine may cause school personnel to be less than receptive to a proposal for relatively permanent and widespread change in their accustomed setting. However, self-contained programs are conducted on a small scale for a limited time, and are more likely to be accepted by personnel unwilling to approve a more ambitious effort. Self-contained delinquency prevention programs are also more likely to overcome another obstacle, that of a perceived lack of resources to support something new. Guidelines under which many grants are awarded favor time-limited, small-scale programs dealing directly with definite youth populations.

2.2.5 Basis for Broader Changes

Self-contained programs are intended to lay the groundwork for subsequent selective organizational change. By applying on a modest trial basis many of the same improvements in school policies and practices that are recommended for benefiting entire student bodies, a self-contained program can serve as a reality check on commonly held presumptions about the consequence of making these changes on a larger scale. The operation of such a program can demonstrate that some fears surrounding modification of policy are unfounded and that certain changes are both feasible and effective. The prospects for spinoff benefits in the form of more general changes in the organization of the school range from piecemeal adoption of practices that have been successful in the special program to school-wide overhaul of tracking policies. Although self-contained programs initially provide benefits only to the limited group of youngsters who participate, they may pave the way for changes that will benefit much larger populations. Those who establish priorities among programs seeking support should weigh initial signs indicating whether their longer range promise can be realized in a particular school.

2.3 Reasons for Basing Self-Contained Delinquency Prevention Programs in Schools

Research points to the school as the most influential single setting with respect to delinquent behavior, more influential than the home in the years when delinquent behavior begins to rise toward a peak at about age 16.[1] Nevertheless, delinquency prevention programs have seldom focused on the school settings. Three arguments in favor of school-based programs are discussed below.

First, the school is central to the present lives and future prospects of young people. A young person's standing as a student is the single most important determinant of his position in the world--it defines relations with peers, employers, and even family. It should not be surprising, then, that school experiences influence more than "cognitive" learning, and that their effects spill over into behavior and interactions with others in a variety of ways both in and out of school. The quality of youth's interactions with his parents depends partly on his standing in school. Peers tend to be those in similar positions with respect to school-assigned classifications; the choice of associates after school is often a school-related matter. The school is an appropriate focus for intervention partly because of its central place in the lives of young people.

Second, school is the place where quite a bit of troublesome behavior takes place. In meetings with school administrators and teachers, complaints about classroom disruption, truancy, vandalism, and violence are quick to surface. Studies of school violence and vandalism have proliferated in the last 10 years. State legislators and local policymakers have addressed issues of school attendance and disruptive behavior. As demands on schools proliferate--demands to achieve more diverse goals, with greater numbers of students over longer periods of time--influence of the school on troublesome behavior is increasingly an issue. The school is a relevant and appropriate focus for intervention partly because it is the setting for an array of troublesome behavior and because schools have a stake in preventing or reducing that behavior. That is, delinquency prevention is a practical problem for schools.

Third, schools appear to be organized in ways that unintentionally but systematically contribute to troublesome behavior on the part of some young people. This is the least-well-recognized, but most powerful, argument in favor of intervention in schools. Schools have an enormous

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[1] This research is described in Chapter Two of Delinquency Prevention: Theories and Strategies.

potential to be vehicles for bonding to conventional norms, they are primary sources of opportunity, and the importance of labeling in school appears to surpass that of any other institution, including the juvenile justice system. For most young people, school is the main avenue for achieving legitimacy. But just as we recognize the potential for the school to mold our young people into successful, productive, law-abiding citizens, we must also seek in the school the influences that result for some in failure, alienation, and delinquency. Studies have identified several areas in which these influences exist including the following:

- Practices of student classification and selection appear to contribute to delinquency and other troublesome behavior. The practice and consequences of "sorting" have received substantial attention in the research literature. Such practices, however described (ability grouping, tracking, curriculum placement), have been supported by a variety of administrative and pedagogical rationales but have also been linked to troublesome behavior.

- Governance arrangements, rules and regulations, disciplinary procedures all appear to have an influence on the incidence of troublesome behavior. The Safe Schools Study Report to Congress (NIE, 1977) concluded that:

  A fair, firm, and consistent system for funning a school seems to be a key factor in reducing violence. Where the rules are known, and where they are firmly and fairly enforced, less violence occur s.... However, a hostile and authorization attitude on the part of the teachers toward the students can result in more vandalism (p.9).

To the degree that the school is, on other respects, a place that provides a stake in conventional, law-abiding action, a legitimate and fair system of discipline ought to be effective.

- Interactions between students and teachers can increase the incidence of troublesome behavior. Although a number of aspects of these relationships may be at issue, the greatest attention has been devoted to the effects of labeling as conveyed in the course of day-to-day interaction.

- School factors appear to be more powerful in producing delinquent behavior than home and family factors, at least among students in secondary schools. Reporting the result of a rigorous, longitudinal study of the etiology of delinquency and dropout (and the relationship)

between delinquency and dropout), Elliott and Voss (1974) conclude:

> School-related variables are the strongest predictors of both dropout and delinquency for males and females; parental rejection is predictive of delinquency for females.
>
> Contrary to popular view, delinquency appears to decline among young people who drop out, and to increase among those who remain in school under conditions of failure coupled with alienation. Delinquency and dropout are in important ways alternative responses to the school situation.

These findings may seem surprising to those who have relied upon large-scale studies of school effects (Coleman, 1966; Jencks, 1972), since the conclusion is that there are few differences between schools in their effects on student achievement or behavior and that changing schools will make only a minimal difference in those student outcomes. On this matter, a recent review by Rutter et al. (1979) offers this observation:

> A major point about the large-scale surveys is that they examined a very narrow range of school variables. The main focus was on resources, as reflected in items and teacher-pupil ratio.....these rather concrete variables say nothing about a whole range of school features which might influence children's behavior and attainments. As Jencks et al. (1972) themselves pointed out, they "ignored not only attitudes and values but the internal life of school" (pp.4-5).

It is precisely this internal school life that is examined and found to be a cause of delinquency in the studies cited here.

In sum, the school is a relevant and appropriate locus of intervention partly (and most importantly) because certain school practices contribute in unintended but systematic ways to delinquent and other troublesome behavior, both in and out of school.

This is not to claim that school organization is the single cause of delinquent behavior, and that by designing schools properly we could avoid all troublesome behavior. However, school forces are powerful and have been generally unattended in programs of delinquency prevention. The evidence is sufficiently persuasive to warrant a concerted attempt at practical application. They are also primary targets for selective organizational change, a goal that internal operation of a self-contained program can facilitate.

3. CHAPTER THREE: FEATURES OF SELF-CONTAINED DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS BASED IN SCHOOLS

The following program features, and the principles upon which they are based, are key factors that can spell the difference between success and failure in reducing delinquent behavior. As described earlier, the primary aims are to establish within the larger school setting a situation that maximizes delinquency-reducing forces and to contribute to greater initiatives affecting the whole school over the long term. In this chapter, the features likely to satisfy these aims are grouped into five categories: (1) program content and activities, (2) participants, (3) day-to-day program practices, (4) program setting and (5) program evaluation. The emphasis here is on features that may be peculiar to self-contained delinquency prevention programs. Many points that commonly apply to a broader array of classroom efforts are omitted.

3.1 Program Content and Activities

First and foremost, the content of the program should be appealing to the youth selected for the program. Participants should view their activities as useful, competent, and interesting; the program should provide opportunities to belong to a group and to exert influence on the group and its activities. Secondly, the school and the community should perceive the activities as having educational merit.

From the standpoint of delinquency prevention, any legitimate activity that appeals to young people enough so that they will not want to jeopardize its existence through misconduct should be instrumental in reducing delinquent behavior. From the standpoint of smooth functioning of a program, building this kind of stake in good conduct among participants is the preferred mechanism for maintaining internal discipline. The more participants value their good standing in the program, the less need there will be for staff to resort to extrinsic rewards and punishments.

However, it is not enough that participants view their activities as valuable. There are at least three reasons for choosing content that outsiders consider to have educational merit. First is the practical matter of obtaining permission to start the program. Second is the goal of providing participants with credentials to offset poor ratings they may have earned in more conventional academic activities. The value of credentials in other settings rests upon a favorable view by outsiders of the setting in which the credentials were earned. Third is the objective to use the program as a preliminary to selective organizational change in the same school in the future. Program content of questionable value will not influence decisionmakers to be receptive to further innovation.

Both participants and outsiders should view program content as having legitimate merit. The choice of particular activities within

these bounds is unlikely to affect the success of a program. The selection of activities should based on the way participants and others view them, not on the assumption that some activities are intrinsically better than others for preventing delinquency. The success of a particular program depends on the extent to which it adheres to principles and guidelines, not on the discovery of a "magical" combination of activities. For example, there is no body of content capable of saving a program that does not follow appropriate recruitment procedures.

Working as a vocational intern, studying history or current political practices in the community, producing a dramatic videotape or slide presentation, exploring local geological formations, or identifying and attempting to solve a community problem--any activity of this kind can be the most visible part of either a successful or an unsuccessful program. The difference between success and failure lies in the perception of the activity by participants and outsiders and design and implementation of the program.

The following items should be considered when the program content is being chosen.

3.1.1 Negotiation of Content

The activities of the program should result from negotiation among the young participants, the adults who work with them, school personnel, and others in the community. One purpose of the negotiation is to insure that the content chosen is widely perceived as legitimate--useful, competent, interesting, relevant to personal circumstances and aspirations, providing opportunities to belong, and therefore, capable of legitimatizing it to participants. Negotiation eliminates the need to second-guess the perceptions of others, a practice that can have disastrous consequences. Arranging a credited activity in this way increases the basis for bonding to conventional activities and persons and increases correspondence between widely shared aspirations and socially acceptable means of attaining them. A second purpose of the negotiation is to provide participants with some influence over a matter that affects them, in this case the content of the program. A third purpose is to provide everyone involved, including members of the larger community, with a sense of ownership in the program. While the nature of the specific activity that emerges from the negotiation is not critical, its acceptance by participants and others is a cornerstone of the program.

3.1.2 Description of Content

The content of the program should be describable in terms of its positive, legitimate merits, without mention of its potential for preventing delinquency. Appropriate content can stand on its own as valuable, without requiring justification on other counts. The fact that

the program is intended to reduce delinquent behavior among its participants need not be made public; this aspect can remain an internal matter known only by selected staff. Very few situations in the development and operation of the program will require its description as a delinquency-prevention program, and most of these situations will be sufficiently removed from the program that they will not matter. For the other situation, alternate language can be used. Part of a program's prevention potential lies in its ability to offset negative labels that participants may have accumulated elsewhere in the school. Announcing a delinquency-prevention effort would destroy that potential and would probably reinforce the undesirable self-images that some participants bring with them to the program. The same risk applies to such well-intended program labels as "compensatory learning," "citizenship training," and "education for special students." Also inappropriate are clever acronyms and program titles that convey a promise of fun or frivolity, but little else. From the standpoint of persuading others of a program's legitimate educational merit, naming a high school project "Get a Handle on Language--and Fly" is probably preferrable to naming it "Ah, Come One, Let's Play--Why Not?" A suitable program title by itself cannot make the activities worthwhile, but an unsuitable title can diminish the benefits of a good program.

3.1.3 Partnership Activities

Program activities should provide opportunities for young people to work with each other and with adults as partners on shared tasks. It is possible to have 30 adults in an activity with 30 young people and still have no partnerships. This is the case when the shared expectation is that all the adults are "teaching" and all the young people are "learning." Partnerships are defined by a mutual understanding that people are working together on a shared task, combining their interests, talents, and energies. The exact nature of the relationship grows out of the task. Since experience, skill, information, and judgment are important to accomplishing the task at hand, and since these characteristics usually come with age, the adults will be the senior partners. This arrangement still leaves room for a great deal of collegiality, which is frequently missing in adult-youth working relationships. A program with a negotiated content that fulfills the expectations of all involved groups has a better chance of fostering collegiality than one with an imposed content.

Members of the larger community, as well as school personnel, should participate in shared tasks. In addition to building attachments between troubled youths and adults representing conventional morals, the face-to-face contact can counteract the adults' previously held perceptions based on the youths' bad reputations. This arrangement can also reward some young people in the program by providing them with adult contacts that may later open doors to jobs and other opportunities for bonding.

Some young people have parents whose business or union affiliations assure the youngsters of a place in the labor market. For the many youth without this advantage, participating in a self-contained program in school, especially one that involves labor unions and industry, offers another way of "getting to know the right people."

3.1.4 Support Services

Program content can include providing special support services to selected youths, if they are needed and will contribute to the success of the program. Since such services carry the risks of isolation and negative labeling, precaution should be taken to minimize their effect on the program's image and on the youths' reputations.

Support services for troubled youths should not be a substitute for organizing the situation presented by the program activity properly. Special support sometimes means helping young people adjust to a bad situation; that is not the approach preferred here. Rather, a form of advising for both youths and adults connected with the program can gather information to be used in rearranging the situation as needed, and can insure that the situation is perceived correctly and that all participants are able to take advantage of the progran's opportunities.

Whenever feasible, young people should be providers of support services rather than recipients. Escorting a fellow participant to a program activity, giving advice to peers, tutoring younger students--all of these actions can help a young person feel that he has made a difference. Allowing someone who needs a particular kind of support to give support to someone else with a similar need is more effective than simply tutoring and counseling. Letting youths themselves act as contributors carries much less risk of stigma than making them objects of service delivery. This approach can also enhance two facets of legitimacy: Influence and usefulness. For delinquency prevention, making an active contribution is both more influential and more useful than simply receiving passively. The ability to let youths help one another with problems depends partly on maintaining a mixture of participants, as described in the following section of this paper. Although such a mixture is critical for other reasons, it avoids the risk of counterproductive peer pressure that may result when all of the young people providing support services are disaffiliated.

3.2 Methods of Selecting, Recruiting, and Describing Participants

A common selection practice is to single out individuals "in danger of becoming delinquent," "at high risk," "in need of better citizenship habits," or "displaying early signs of troublesome behavior," and then either to assign them to a special program or to allow them to "choose" to participate in a special program in order to escape some form of

punishment. Characteristics of family and economic backgrounds of teachers, observations test scores, and opinions of guidance counselors are some of the factors used to identify youthful program targets. No matter what the program is named, the result is usually a room full of young people considered to be either deficient or in trouble. This kind of targeting serves an accountability function: It allows specific requirements for selection of participants, and its assures funding sources that only those who really need help are being helped. Unfortunately, a program that uses this selection approach is more likely to increase the delinquent behavior of participants than to reduce it. The damaging effects of grouping and labeling participants in this manner can outweigh any potential benefits of the program. If the sole choice is between a program that admits only "troublesome" students and no program at all, it is preferred, from the standpoint of delinquency prevention, to have no program at all.

For a self-contained school-based program to be effective in reducing delinquency, the following considerations should govern the selection, recruitment, and description of participants.

3.2 1 Mixture of Participants

To guarantee its legitimacy, the program should serve a mixture of youth so that, as a group, the participants will be perceived as an ordinary assortment of young people. Programs serving a large proportion of youths regarded as troublesome, unproductive, or incompetent acquire a "spoiled image;" such programs are known to be for "that element." They are as likely to compound negative labels as they are to overcome them, and they can be instrumental in creating peer group support for delinquent behavior. To avoid these problems, programs should include a mixture of participants from all segments of the student population. The object is to at least make it impossible to label the program participants negatively as a group. At best, the program will be seen as worthwhile and attractive and the participants as "ordinary."

From the point of view of participants, no one should to able to perceive the group as a familiar bunch of losers. Everyone should be able to tell their parents, teachers, and friends of their accomplishments in the program, without the fear that the impact of such news will be diminished by the program's reputation.

3.2.2 Selection Criteria

To obtain leverage on delinquent behavior and to confirm the intended image of the program, the basis for identifying a service population should be uniform criteria linked to common situations, conditions, and processes affecting a class of young people. At best, the chosen criteria will have a demonstrable bearing on the generation of delinquent behavior.

These considerations make scores on personality inventories, for example, inappropriate in two ways. First, they are an individual, rather than a group, criterion. Second, they have no demonstrable link to delinquent behavior. Socioeconomic background would be similarly inappropriate as a basis for selection. Although this indicator applies to a class of young people, its connection with delinquent behavior is confounded by other factors, such as ability grouping or track position within a school. Assignment to a lower track subjects young people to delinquency-producing forces, so track position is an appropriate group criterion for identifying a service population.[1] In order to maintain a proper mixture this service population should never represent more than one-third to one-half of the total number of participants in the program.

3.2.3 Recruitment

Once a prospective service population is identified, recruitment from the selected class of youths should be on the basis of the legitimate merits of the basic program activity and not as a response to trouble, actual or anticipated. The youth's participation in the program should be truly voluntary and should not be depicted as a way to "regain good standing" or as an alternative to disciplinary action or an unpleasant assignment. Even though their selection was on the basis of some indication that they are in a category that stands greater risk of involvement in delinquent behavior, these youths should not be approached on this basis. They should be approached and recruited on the grounds of the legitimate attractiveness of the program and their interest in it. To safeguard against introducing individual criteria, presentations for recruitment purposes should be made to groups, not individuals. Although recruitment can miss the target by attracting too few participants from the service population, a greater risk lies in attracting too many from this group, giving the program a spoiled image. When developing a proposal for a recent high school program, the staff members were concerned that school personnel would regard the targeted subpopulation of students as unworthy of receiving the benefits that were built into a program. Acting in this concern, the staff took deliberate steps to insure that they did not recruit a disproportionate number of the "best" students, thereby robbing needier students of a valuable experience. A site visit after the program was underway revealed that, like several efforts that has preceded it, the program had become a dumping ground for troublesome students. Both the young persons in the program and others in the school saw participation in the program to be a sign of personal deficiency.

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[1] Evidence concerning the relationships (or lack of them) between delinquent behavior and track position, socioeconomic background, and personality test scores appears in chapter 2 of Preventing Delinquency: Theories and Strategies.

3.2.4 Presentation of Program

The manner in which the program is presented to participants and outsiders should cultivate the feeling that the young participants have something to contribute and will perform productively with appropriate support and supervision. The programs are intended to overcome accumulated histories of failure and problems. Because of these histories, some participants will be regarded by school personnel, and perhaps by themselves, as losers. Also, the programs they have been assigned to previously may have been regarded in a similar light as programs for losers. To overcome these negative images and to support other principles presented here, the program cannot start from an equivocal or pessimistic stance. It must begin with the expectation that the participants will succeed.

3.3 Day-to-Day Program Practices

A number of features in the day-to-day operation of a program will help realize the program's potential that was created by suitable content and selection and recruitment procedures. Because the program's broad purpose is to offset the effects of damaging practices in other parts of the social environment, including the school itself, routines within the program will depart in some ways from common mainstream school practices. Departures from normal procedures will have to be deliberate, particularly when existing practices have become second nature to the program staff. The following program routines are recommended:

3.3.1 Recognition/Feedback

Rewards, corrective feedback, and important, information about the activity should be built into normal day-to-day interaction in the program, rather than occurring only intermittently as "special events." The elements of legitimacy should have a continuing prominence for participants. This is unlikely to occur when recognition is based on performance in an entire program, with mastery of 50 percent of the content defined as failure. Both recognition of competence and corrective feedback to improve competence should occur throughout the program.

For example, it is possible to run a photography class in such a way that the youths involved receive only very general feedback on how they are doing, the feedback is not helpful in correcting performance, there are few chances to try something again to do it better, and evaluation comes only at the end of the class. Skillful instructors, however, break the business of photography down into smaller pieces so that they can be recognized, practiced, evaluated, and rewarded on a day-to-day basis. Modest progress is more visible; students have more specific directions for doing a given task over.

What is needed here is not a system of frequent extrinsic rewards or punishment. The feedback should emerge directly from the activity. Receiving a pat on the back and a cracker for vaguely specificed "good performance" has much less meaning than knowing exactly what one can do today that one could not do yesterday. Some programs have invested in football, ping pong, air hockey, and pool equipment so that diligent work can be rewarded with game privileges. These are attractive extrinsic rewards, but they bear no more relationship to program content than a cracker does.

The recommended procedure is to carefully analyze an activity ahead of time, break it into clearly specifiable increments, and determine the expected result of the small, daily interactions that occur. This will make it possible to give participants positive feedback that produces more than a transitory glow and negative feedback that results in improvement rather than frustration. The goal of this feedback is to build competence in the form of mastering program content (rather than ability to play a reward system) and to insure that participants and others recognize this competence.

The same principle applies to the other components of legitimacy. Whether or not there is a sharp division of labor, day-to-day interaction should reinforce a sense of belonging among participants. Again, this should be a normal part of participating in the program and not merely a function of unusual events, such as parties or group outings. At the same time, deliberate steps should be taken to insure that participants engrossed in small parts of the activity do not lose sight of the usefulness of what they are doing. For most activities, not only is the final polished product useful; many of the pieces are useful as well. Participants should also be able to exert ongoing influence, both individually and collectively, over some aspects of the program. Without sacrificing the overall direction of the program or compromising the principles presented in this paper, some modification can be made after the program is underway. The youthful participants should be made aware of their opportunities to effect change in the program.

3.3.2 Cooperation

The program should be a cooperative, rather than a competitive, venture. Each participant's growth in competence should be rewarded without comparison to others in the program. In the self-contained programs described here, there is no place for a grading system that automatically produces losers regardless of their objective gains in competence. Nor is there a place for reward systems that single out one or a few for elevation in status at the expense of the others in the program (e.g., designating "head boy/head girl of the month"). For many of the participants, competition-based status is one of the features of the larger system that the program is intended to offset.

More subtle ways of producing losers should be avoided as well. Some classroom practices effectively pit every individual against every other in a thinly veiled competition. For example, researchers have found that, when asking questions of a class, teachers pass more quickly over students that they do not expect to answer correctly, giving more time to those from whom they expect correct answer. Such practices contribute to a vicious circle in which losers continue to lose and winners continue to win, a circle that these programs are attempting to break.

3.3.3 Influence

The program should systematically exploit opportunities to improve participants' standing in settings elsewhere in the school, at home, and in the community. This can be accomplished by managing the flow of information to significant parties in those other settings. Identifying the specific merits of the activity, recognizing them routinely, and choosing a credible way of transmitting the information outside the program are all important to this strategy. Good news about participants, generated in the program, should be routinely transmitted by a credible route to influential persons in other settings, unless there is a specific reason not to do this. Bad news about participants, should be withheld unless there is a specific reason to believe that the information will induce a helpful response, or unless it is illegal or immoral to withhold the information. This is one of the primary devices for relabeling participants in a positive direction.

3.3.4 Credentials

In addition to the forms of social legitimization and recognition built into the basic activity (including routine spreading of good news), these programs should provide credible, portable credentials that may open opportunities in the future and in other settings. Many records of progress in school work are not portable and have little currency with persons outside the school. They may accumulate to a course credit and eventually to a diploma, but in the meantime the student has little to show. Interim credentials can be designed to reflect specific competencies and experience with credibility for individuals such as potential employers. The credentials can be provided to participants in modest increments. The more specifically the usefulness and competence of an activity is analyzed, the more options there are to write down what was accomplished, providing something tangible to carry about, show to others, and place on job applications in our credential-conscious society.

3.4 Program Setting

Staffing of the program, its physical location, the hours during which it is conducted, and its public image all should confirm that the program is school-based and school-sponsored. Making outsiders responsible for the program; quartering it in a basement, an unused temporary building, or an off-campus location; running it during off-hours; or depicting it as nothing more than an appendage of normal school operations imply that school sponsorship is only token. When this is true, a number of the program's key advantages will be lost. For several reasons it is important that the efforts of participants appear to be bonafide school activities. First, legitimacy of the program in the eyes of outsiders will be enhanced if it is perceived as belonging to the school. Second, an aim of the program is to build the stake that participants have in their school and to improve the prospects that the school will be an effective vehicle for bonding to conventional norms. This can occur only if the young people in the program view it as an integral part of larger school setting and of recognized curriculum. Third, good news and written credentials are more credible and enduring if they come from the school itself. Fourth, ownership and ongoing support of the program within the school will maximize the chances that it will contribute to wider application of useful principles and strategies in the form of desirable organizational change.

To insure that the program receives more than grudging toleration by school personnel and to avoid the risk that it will become isolated within the school, design and presentation of the program from the outset should emphasize its role as an augmentation of conventional activities, not as an experimental aberration.

3.5 Program Evaluation

A later section of this paper describes specific evaluation information that should be collected (see "Detailed Plan of Action," step 2). The program should be set up so that it is possible to evaluate the way its goals are formulated, the action steps specified, the resources allocated, and the activities carried out.

The design of a self-contained program should provide explicitly for means of monitoring progress and judging consequences for the youth involved, for the school organization as a whole, and for adult participants. The ability to document outcomes will aid in justifying the program before and during its operation and in defending it later. Documentation of favorable outcomes (as contrasted with merely having good feelings about how it went) will be useful in persuading school personnel to apply successful program elements elsewhere in the curriculum. Monitoring of ongoing process as the program progresses generates information needed to continually correct, refine, and improve the

A detailed record of what happened during the course of the program can explain why certain outcomes resulted. If a program is generally successful, there is still good reason to expand its stronger elements and curtail its weaker ones: A carefully kept record of the process can help identify which is which. If a program is generally unsuccessful, the process information can reveal the degree to which the intended design was actually implemented. It can tell whether a repeat attempt requires a new design or more diligent realization of the same design. Operational programs must proceed on the basis of the best knowledge available at the moment, but these same programs can be an important source of improvement in the knowledge base.

3.6 Summary

This section has described more than a dozen critical features of self-contained delinquency prevention programs based in schools. Recommended program content and activities are those that (a) result from negotiation with young participants, the adults who work with them, school personnel, and members of the larger community; (b) are describable (and described) in terms of their positive, legitimate merits and not as measures for reducing delinquency; (c) provide increased opportunities for youth to work with each other and with adults as partners in shared tasks; and (d) employ special support services primarily as a means to enlarge the contributions of participants and to gather information for improving the program. Recommended procedures for selecting, recruiting, and describing program participants are those that (a) serve a mixture of youths that will be perceived as an ordinary group, (b) select half or more of the prospective participants from the entire student body and select the remaining service population on the basis of uniform group criteria, (c) recruit on the basis of the legitimate merits of the program, and (d) cultivate the expectation among youths and adults alike that the young participants have something to contribute and will perform productively with appropriate support and supervision.

Recommended routines for the program in operation are those that (a) build rewards, corrective feedback, and key information about the activity into day-to-day interaction, and insure that the legitimacy of the program is continuously obvious; (b) structure the program as a cooperative, rather than competitive, venture; (c) exploit opportunties to affect the participants' standing in other settings; and (d) provide credentials that have validity outside the program.

The recommended program setting is one in which staffing, location, hours, and public image all confirm that the program is school-based and school-sponsored. Finally, the recommended programs can be evaluated, and a capability for adequate evaluation is built into their initial designs.

4. CHAPTER FOUR: A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS TO LAUNCH A PROGRAM

The earlier sections of this paper have defined self-contained delinquency prevention programs based in schools, presented principles to apply to their operation, and described their key features. The image presented has been largely that of an ongoing activity that is already in place and following a routine. Questions still outstanding pertain to the dynamics of bringing such programs into being. If such a program does not already exist, how is it developed? How can existing programs be refined and strengthened in the ways suggested? This chapter presents a suggested sequence of steps for implementation. The sequence begins when at least one person decides he would like to develop a program of the type recommended and exerts his influence toward that end.

4.1 Preparing To Talk and Assess Opportunity

The first step to take when developing a program is to become familiar with the program principles in this working paper and to read the background material in Delinquency Prevention: Theories and Strategies. Additional reading material on selective organizational change is also relevant for two reasons. First, selective organizational change is an ultimate aim of a self-contained program, and secondly, the opportunity may exist for a broader form of improvement than the establishment of a self-contained program, and knowledge of selective organizational change will make such an opportunity recognizable.

Although the content and activities of the proposed program will be established through negotiation, initial conversations with school administrators, staff, and others will profit from some illustrative material. To have concrete examples to talk about, you could review reports on innovative projects in other schools-environmental studies, magazine publication, offbeat historical investigation (e.g., studies of famous persons who were school dropouts), community problem-solving, interviews with local people whose decisions affect the lives of youth, audio-visual presentation, and vocational experience. When selecting examples, remember that a program's success depends on the application of many principles, not just on a "magical" combination of activities. The importance of content to the success or failure of any specific program depended on the way participants, school personnel, and members of the larger community viewed it at a particular time and place. What worked well at another school might not work well at all in your school. Consequently, the selection of examples of content or activities should not be based on evaluative remarks contained in the reports of others. The illustration should be chosen based on their feasibility in your locality (junior high school students in Nebraska cannot readily explore tide pools), on the reception they will probably receive from prospective participants and school personnel, and on their compati-

bility with the principles contained in this paper. Frequently, examples of programs used in other schools can stimulate ideas that go beyond anything contained in the reports.

4.2 Assessing Opportunities for Action

Initially, informal conversation with school adminstrators, staff, and selected persons in the community can be used to assess the likelihood that a program with the recommended characteristics can be generated and supported. If the possibilities appear favorable, it is advisable to find out how adequate resources, staff, facilities, and administrative support can be made available.

While this assessment is intended primarily to gather information, a second aim of the early conversations is preliminary negotiation. By asking questions and discussing possibilities, you are beginning to negotiate the approach and program design. No matter how informal these conversations, how the program is presented at this point can affect not only its initial acceptance, but also the prospects of further improvements after the program is established. Several aspects of program development should be kept in mind to insure that these initial presentations will have the desired effect.

4.2.1 General Considerations

The following considerations apply to the preliminary discussions with school adminstrators, staff, and others:

(a) Before beginning these conversations, decide which merits of the program to emphasize with which people. Not everyone is equally interested in delinquency prevention, reduction of disruptive school behavior, improvement of attendance, betterment of relations with the larger community, providing quality learning experiences for students, and informative educational experimentation. A program with potential for producing these benefits need not be presented with uniform emphasis to every audience.

(b) Point "a" notwithstanding, it is equally important to avoid inconsistency in these conservations. The merits listed will be consistent with one another; emphasizing them differently will be taken as dishonesty. Comments about the population to be served, and possible undesirable consequences should remain consistent from one audience to the next One way to do this is to write down responses to

all foreseeable questions ahead of time and, whenever an unanticipated question comes up, to note the response that was made so that the answer will be the same next time. As allies are gained, the public statements they make about the program should be consistent.

(c) From the beginning the program features should be ranked in terms of the degree of flexibility or compromise that can be tolerated. Some features must remain relatively inflexible in order to safeguard the potential benefits of the program, for example, the need to maintain a mixture of participants. Other features, like the choice of activities, are more open to negotiation. In short, there is room for selective adaptation and compromise of some program features. With these priorities firmly in mind, one can respond readily and consistently to suggestion for modifications.

(d) Be aware of the weak points of the recommended program, as well as the strong, and be prepared to discuss them bluntly. Painting too rosy a picture at the outset is almost sure to backfire. Although based on the best information available, the recommended program is likely still to be experimental and undoubtedly will require both general refinement and adaption to particular settings. Recommendations should draw upon the experience of others, but some things will have to be learned the hard way, through trial and error. The closer you come to claiming perfection, the more fragile your credibility. A single problem can destroy an early promise that "Nothing can go wrong." Instead of denying the possibility of problems, be prepared to present contingency plans for dealing with them.

(e) Work out enough tentative details pertaining to the ongoing collection of feedback information to satisfy your audiences that the program will receive a fair evaluation. Skeptics who quarrel with your principles may welcome an opportunity to prove them (and you) wrong. Others are likely to be more receptive to a program that will generate answers or new information than

to a program that will not.[1]

4.2.2 Staffing Availability and Support

An additional consideration applies particularly to early conversations with staff. The program will require staffing. In order to install the program as a normal part of school operations, it is preferrable to assemble the staff from existing school personnel. One aim of the assessment is to find out which members under what conditions would be willing to participate in the intended program. There is a further need to identify the difficulties that design and implementation of the program will present for them and to discern how these difficulties might be eased.

In conversations designed to find a potential staff for the program, you can explore possible support for the intended program principles, such as negotiating a legitimatizing activity and working with a mixture of youths; and investigate willingness to undertake the revisions of teaching materials, methods, and relationships that are likely to be required. A desired outcome of the assessment is the discovery of a group of staff members who, under appropriate circumstances, have the interest and ability to undertake such a program and who will support one another in the attempt.

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[1]There is recent evidence that this and at least two other points listed have broader application than that presented here. A study of the acceptance of a new cloud seeding program (to increase rainfall and reduce hail) in various part of South Dakota found that accepting the program and staying with it were more likely to occur in counties where residents saw the program as an experimental chance to find answers than in counties where residents saw the program only as an operational attempt to control the weather. In both this study and a study of the acceptance of new group home programs in Massachusetts, researchers found that downplaying the weaknesses of a proposed program (point 4 above) and offering inconsistent facts from one presentation to the next (point 2 above) were related to rejection of the programs. The cloud seeding findings appear in Barbara C. Farfar, Grant Johnson, et al., Technology and Society: Weather Modification in South Dakota, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado, Boulder: 1978. The group home findings appear in Robert B. Coates, "Community-Based Corrections: Concept, Impact, Dangers," in Juvenile Correctional Reform in Massachusetts: A Preliminary Report, by Lloyd E. Ohlin, Alden D. Miller, and Robert B. Coates, NIJJDP, Washington, DC: 1977.

4.2.3 Administrative Support

Another consideration applies particularly to early conversations with administrators. The prospective staff will need permission or support from building or system administrators (as well as other faculty) to spend time on the development of the program; the invention or assignment of the appropriate course titles; the arrangement of evaluation, grading, and crediting procedures; and the arrangement of procedures for student involvement outside the school. Ordinarily, the principal is a key figure.

The response of administrators to the intended program will depend both on their personal reactions to its methods and objectives and on the reactions they anticipate from district administrators, parents, and the faculty as a whole (or some influential subset of the faculty). To assess only the administrators' personal perspectives will miss important influences on the outcome.

One highly relevant matter is whether school administrators and faculty perceive that they are under pressure from the school board, system administrators, or citizens to deal with existing problems in the school or community, If such pressures exist, they can function either as a preoccupation that prohibits considering any new program or as a justification for trying a new program. The way the program is presented can make the difference. The key is to bill it as a promising solution to the problem and therefore, a desirable response to the pressures.

The desired outcome of this part of the assessment is to discover the set of circumstances under which administrators would permit and support the intended program.

4.2.4 Community Cooperation

Some aspects of many contemplated programs will transcend school boundaries, particularly when the program is intended to involve students in the study of work or in working, in community affairs or service, or in the study of practical skills. In any program that requires sending students into the community for part of the activity or bringing adults from the community into school as resources--it will be desirable to confirm the arrangements and establish relationships well in advance of the startup of the program. When this is the case, an additional component of the assessment is to explore the possibility that community organizations and citizens will sponsor and supervise youth in community involvement and will come into the school on a regular basis as needed.[1] As with school administrators, conversations with citizens and organizational

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[1]Anticipating a prevalent logistical restraint on activities away from campus, including representatives of public transportation in these discussions may avoid problems later.

representatives should address more than their personal perspectives on schooling, delinquency, and youth programs. The extent of their cooperation will depend also on the reactions they can expect from their supervisors and colleagues, financial possibilities and limits, existing laws and policies, and an array of influences over which these people have little or no control. Understanding these factors will help you identify the boundaries within which an ally will be free to support the program.

The goal of this part of the assessment is to discover the circumstances under which appropriate community organizations, groups, and persons will play necessary roles in the intended program. This component of the assessment should take place simultaneously with the conversations with administrators, since they might take commitments of support from the community as persuasive reasons to lend their own support.

4.2.5 Cost and Resources

As the assessment proceeds, it might become clear that some costs of the intended program go beyond what existing allocations can defray. Assembling a staff to run a credited program as part of their normal teaching load and as a normal part of the curriculum does not in itself overcome obstacles posed by costs. The potential staff members may feel the need for time to develop new materials and methods, to receive training, and to rehearse new relationships among themselves and with students. Providing this time may require hiring substitute teachers or paying summer salaries. And, there are other such one-time costs of change.

Recall the earlier recommendation to maximize the use of typically available resources for conducting these programs. This means that supplemental resources must be used as modestly as possible. The risk of bringing in massive outside funding is that, even if the program is implemented successfully, others will feel they cannot do the same because they do not have the same extra money.

While existing arrangements for in-service training, preparation, and released time, should be exploited as much as possible, grants should be considered a possibility. This part of the assessment explores the circumstances under which resources could be made available and might be the beginning of the negotiation of a grant.

4.2.6 Solutions to Other Implementation Problems

The intended program will probably depart from or violate customary arrangements in the school. Early conversations with administrators and others will probably identify program features that differ from habitual practice, school policies, existing regulations, standards or accrediting rules, or relevant laws. Provision of partial, interim credits and credentials, for example, may be unusual enough in itself to face barriers from within or outside the school.

As possible barriers to implementation are discovered, it might be helpful to investigate how the program could be constructed and described, or how existing rules might be waived to permit the program to be implemented. In short, the assessment ought to find possible solutions to problems as they are revealed or anticipated.

4.3 Organizing Support

As mentioned earlier, efforts to organize support actually begin in the assessment stage. Two additional considerations should be remembered when laying groundwork for support during the assessment. First, trying various ways of asking questions and describing possibilities will increase the possibilities for presenting the program in a light that makes it acceptable and desirable. This is better than using one set description consistently, whether it produces satisfactory responses or not.

Secondly, when circumstances seem unfavorable for the intended program, it is better to keep the scope of the assessment narrow. A program that is started up as a result of strong support of a small group in the midst of general indifference is better than a program that seeks universal support and is never implemented. Under these circumstances, the most prudent course might be to refrain from seeking more support or permission than is specifically required to begin an adequate program and, instead, to concentrate on neutralizing opposition or trying to render it indifferent. Sometimes efforts to convert opposition to support can turn into nothing more than added irritations in the form of constant reminders to those who object to the program. This does not mean passing up promising opportunities to generate support; a broad base of allies may amount to overkill in terms of starting a program, but it will improve the prospects for long-range expansion of the program and for selective organizational change in the future.

Another point applies to the recruitment of supporters not only in the assessment stage but also throughout the implementation sequence. Of necessity, many people will hear only general descriptions of the program. The less involved someone is in the actual conduct of the program, the fewer details he needs. The neccessity to present an overview to wider audiences may unintentionally provide misleading information. One way to obtain agreement from almost everyone is to use catch words that universal appeal. These words owe their broad appeal to the fact that have universal appeal. These words owe their broad diverse array of outlooks including some that are diametrically opposed to the principles described in this paper.

Four examples are "discipline," "respect," "accountability," and "responsibility." Hardly anyone would argue that these are not desirable characteristics for young people to have. By one interpretation, each of these qualities is something the program should convey to those who particpate in it. But for some people, the terms mean something totally imcompatible with what the program offers.

A program may impart <u>discipline</u> by providing young people with something they value too much to risk losing through misconduct. However, it will not offer an authoritarian system of punishments intended to produce a docile, unquestioning obedience, which is what some people mean by discipline. A program may impart <u>respect</u> for elders by demonstrating that adults are capable of understanding, helping, and providing useful instruction. However, it does not aim to make youth blindly accepting of whatever adults tell them, and this is what some mean by respect. A program may impart <u>accountability</u> by teaching young people that many of their present actions have important, predictable consequences in the future. However, the program will not encourage its participants to keep staff members informed of their every move and of violations by classmates, and this is what some mean by accountability. A program may impart responsibility by giving young people the opportunity to recognize and act upon their capabilities to accomplish something useful. However, it will not teach participants that the source of any difficulties they encounter lies within them, and this is what some mean by responsibility.

Using these and similar terms invites audiences to hear only what they want. As a consequence, some are likely to pledge support based on false assumptions about the program. Moreover, a few genuine supporters may become alienated, if they associate the catch words with a faction they disagree with. In short, this is the <u>wrong</u> approach to recruiting support. It will attract persons who are sure to become disillusioned when they hear the details of the program. At best, the recruitment process will have to begin anew. At worst, the credibility of the intended program will suffer irreparable damage,

and the whole project will be lost. Either of these is an exhorbitant price to pay for the fleeting satisfaction of seeing a roomful of people nodding in agreement.

The argument here is not against the use of generalities per se. It is appropriate to omit some details, as long as enough are presented to allow people to make an informed decision to support the program or not. What is discouraged are presentations that not only leave details out but also mislead. Honesty in this regard serves a valuable screening function. It improves the odds that the supporters identified will be able to work together productively to implement the intended program, once they are organized.

Following the assessment stage, efforts should focus on organizing the support already cultivated. This may involve:

- Cultivating the relationships that individuals and the groups or agencies they represent will have with one another. The goal is to turn an array of supporters into an organization to undertake a program. The participants need to be brought together to affirm their shared intent, to start working out their respective parts and roles, and to become comfortable with one another and with their new possibly unsettling venture.

- Obtaining specific commitments to participate in seeking a detailed, workable design for a program. The demand placed on allies at this point is deliberately nonthreatening; they are promising only to try to discover a workable design, not to do it nor to succeed at it. By this time, the working group should include persons capable of helping to design a program so that it can be properly evaluated, and capable of subsequently conducting an evaluation.

- Negotiating acceptance of concrete implications of the program principles. As agreements to proceed become more concrete, the principles of the intended program increasingly risk subversion. The closer they come to some concrete activity, the more pressure participants are under to get what they want (or need) from the program. This pressure may not be consistent with the intended principles. Move into agreements cautiously, allowing time to notice how important principles

are being affected and time to renegotiate as necessary to avoid unacceptable compromise.

- Dealing with sources of resistance. Several points concerning opposition have already been mentioned: Refrain from using misleading catchwords, try to turn opposition into indifference; give consistent responses to objections; and avoid claims of perfection for the program.

Besides these, some additional measures are appropriate:

- Give participants in the program opportunities to formulate persuasive responses to objections and develop strategies for dealing with visible problems that may arise after the program is underway.

- Discover some aspects of the program that opponents can genuinely approve. (The list of intended benefits in the "overview" section of this paper should prove useful for this purpose.) Someone who perceives limited grounds for support and who is not being asked to do anything may become comfortably indifferent, rather than opposed.

- Seek a "let's just try it" agreement, with the provision that a good evaluation is part of the program. Opponents may view the evaluation as creating an opportunity for them to say "I told you so" and thus become more willing to let the program proceed.

- Arrange acceptable ways for opponents to be marginal observers or participants without becoming publicly identified with the program.

- Recognize that the circle of active supporters probably will dwindle as plans become more concrete. Those who cannot maintain their commitments in the face of program specifics should be given a chance to bow out gracefully, without having to become vocal opponents simply to justify their departure.

4.4 Developing a Detailed Plan of Action

The undertaking at this point is simultaneously political, organizational, and technical. Politically, one must balance program principles with the goals of all participants and the organizations they represent. Organizationally, program characteristics most likely to reduce delinquency from a theoretical and empirical standpoint must be balanced with what is usual, possible, and permissible within the school. Technically, a precise plan must be achieved by converting principles of specifics without sacrificing consensus among the participants.

Often, the product of this balancing act is a plan that is sufficiently ambiguous to look acceptable to everyone involved. Unfortunately, allowing ambiguity at this point for the sake of harmony merely postpones the problem, possibly until it is too late for any remedy. If plan development proceeds without a problem, all the groundwork may have been laid very well. However, the alternate possibility is that the plan simply is not specific enough to offend and, hence, will be subject to seriously divergent interpretation when carried out, which means trouble for the program later on.

To insure that actual conduct of the program will closely resemble what is intended, the program supporters must agree at this point on detailed, sequential steps for achieving the desired program feature, obtaining approval and needed resources, and making a final selection of staff. The agreement should include commitments from individuals to accomplish certain tasks by specific deadlines.

To insure that people understand what they have agreed to, as well as what others will do and when, the steps and assignments should be put in writing. A written plan is also useful in other ways. It can be presented to administrators for formal approval before work proceeds further; it can provide persuasive backup in requests for funding or other resources needed not only to conduct the program, but to develop it; and it constitutes a record against which actual procedures in carrying out the program can be compared for evaluation purposes.

The rest of this section discusses what the sequential steps might be. They are intended to produce content, procedures for selection and recruitment of participants, day-to-day routines, a decision on setting, and evaluation guidelines that meet the criteria presented earlier in this paper. They are also intended to result in approval, staffing arrangements, and other resources needed to

carry out the program successfully. Whether or not the steps are the same, this is the ground that should be covered in developing a plan for any school-based, self-contained delinquency prevention program. All those who will be involved directly in the program should participate as a group in developing action steps or in adapting the ones presented here.

4.4.1 Specifying Selection Criteria

Exact selection criteria and recruitment procedures for obtaining youth participants should be specified. Remember that the program should be open to all students, but should attract a portion of its participants (up to one-third or one-half) from a service population whose prospects for benefiting from such a program are uncommonly high. Obtaining this kind of mix requires recruiting from the student body as a whole and, at the same time, recruiting more aggressively from an identified subpopulation of students. Too little recruitment from the subpopulation will keep the program from reaching those who stand to profit from it most. Too much recruitment from the subpopulation (the more common error) will often give the program an image that will drive away students who are not in the subpopulation and will destroy its ability to convey legitimacy to anyone.

Group, rather than individual, criteria should identify the service population, i.e., neighborhood of residence would be appropriate as a selection basis, and psychological test scores would be inappropriate. However, the merits of group selection criteria can be lost unless recruitment also is conducted on a group basis. For example, telling advisers to suggest the self-contained program to every individual from a certain neighborhood who comes through the registration line may introduce factors other than the one intended as a basis for selection. Appearance or prior conduct (either good or bad, depending on how an adviser views the program) may cause some students to be singled out to receive extra encouragement to sign up for the program. One way to avoid this pitfall is to use a selection criterion that identifies a category of youth who ordinarily come together physically at some time during the school day, thus permitting recruitment, as well as selection, to occur on a group basis. One criterion that applies to groups, that bears a relationship to delinquent behavior, and that allows group recruitment is assignment to a lower academic track, or ability grouping. Those in a low track position tend to populate certain classrooms as groups. Classrooms provide convenient settings for group presentations designed to recruit participants for the self-contained program. By making such presentations in a disproportionate number of low-track classrooms, as compared with "mainstream" classrooms, the desired mix of participants should be attainable. On some campuses, a modicum of further control over the probable mix to be obtained can come from carefully choosing locations for posting advance announcements about

the program. Depending on patterns of movement within the school, bulletins placed in certain classrooms or corridors (or even on certain school buses) may be noticed more by students in the service population.

At this point staff members and others involved in the program must agree on the details of selection and recruitment. How many young persons will be in the program altogether? Of this number, how many should come from the service population? What will be the basis for identifying the service population? Who will make recruitment presentation and where? What features of the program will these presentations emphasize, in order to make the program appear attractive without "overselling" it?

4.4.2 Evaluation

Make detailed arrangements for collecting information to be used in evaluating the program. Evaluation should be considered from the time a program is first contemplated, and not merely tacked on as an after-thought or, worse yet, overlooked until the program is nearly over. If a professional evaluator (or researcher) is available from the school or community, he should be involved from the beginning. Now is the time to identify the information needed for a suitable evaluation, to agree upon means for collecting and recording the information, and to assign responsibility to individuals for obtaining each kind of data. Except for measures of skills associated with the specific content of the program (which is yet to be determined), the bulk of information needed to assess both outcomes and process can be specified before proceeding further.

The list of possible program benefits presented earlier includes some outcomes other than the development of particular skills that some people are likely to desire and expect the program to accomplish. These are reduction of delinquent behavior (in and out of school), improvement in general school performance, and increased attendance. Further, the theoretical rationale behind various program features implies intermediate outcomes, such as an increase in self-esteem, a reduction in feelings of powerlessness, more favorable views toward the school and its teachers, and a perception that one is regarded more positively by parents, school personnel, and others in the community.

With respect to these and other desired program results, the appropriate question at this point is "How will we know if we succeeded? The answer is to specify what information will be collected and how. For example, one way to measure reduction in delinquent behavior, as well as most of the intermediate outcomes listed, is through self-reports administered at the beginning and end of a student's participation, and possibly at a later time (to assess long-range outcomes). Changes in school performance and attendance rates can be evaluated through examination of records. Additional information can come from informal evaluative input from participants and from interviews with parents, teachers, and other members of the community who have knowledge of individual participants.

In order to know what it was that succeeded (or failed), it is essential to document the process as it was carried out, beginning with the assessment and implementation steps already outlined and continuing for the duration of the program. To what extent did the actual conduct of the program correspond to what was envisioned? In what ways were the recommended features converted to practice? What was the relative exposure of different participants to various facets of the program? Answering these questions requires an ongoing collection of information on key characteristics of the program. The following outline suggests some points to cover for the purpose of process evaluation:

(a) Content and Activities.

(1) Forms of initial negotiations with administrators, staff, and young participants concerning content.

(2) Extent of consensus concerning content among administrators, staff, and participants.

(3) Ways in which the selected content and activities were described to various persons and groups.

(4) Suitability of the resources available (including persons) to delivering the content selected.

(5) Sources and nature of changes in content or shifts in emphasis after the start of the program.

(6) Feedback or reactions received by participants when they reported to others what they were doing in the program.

(7) Special projects or tasks undertaken by individuals in the program.

(8) Nature of special support services (provided by whom, under what circumstances, to what recipients).

(b) Participants.

(1) Proportion in the program who were drawn from the intended service population.

(2) Criteria used to identify the service population.

(3) Recruitment procedures used.

(4) Level of exposure of individuals to the program (attendance records, dates of entry, and termination).

(5) General characteristics of participants (age, grade level, grade point average, etc.).

(6) Remarks by participants or others conveying a general image of those in the program.

(c) Day-to-Day Program Practices

(1) Nature of rewards and circumstances under which they were given (increments of work accomplished, growth in individual competencies, etc.)

(2) Nature and circumstances of corrective feedback provided.

(3) Visible signs of cooperation/competition.

(4) Kinds of input received from youthful participants and responses to that input.

(5) Division of labor and responsibility between youth and adults.

(6) Kinds of information on individual participants sent home, elsewhere in the school, or to others in the community (to whom sent, for what reasons, favorable or unfavorable).

(7) Interim and final credentials provided.

(d) Setting

(1) Location and description of classroom or other main facility used.

(2) Location and extent of nonclassroom or field activities.

(3) Hours during which activities were conducted.

(4) Visible signs that the program was a bona-fide school activity and recognized as part of the curriculum.

(5) Indications of ongoing administrative support (resources provided, verbal or written statements by administrators).

(6) Program staff selection and special training received.

Those involved in the program should agree among themselves on who will be responsible for collecting and recording each kind of information pertaining to both outcomes and process. A schedule should be made specifying dates for obtaining and consolidating various types of information, and for analyzing data from logs, questionnaires, interviews, and other sources. To reiterate, a design for evaluating everything except the attainment of specific skills can be developed well ahead of the start of the program.

4.4.3 Establishing Tentative Program Content

Meet with administrators, others from whom permission is required, and the program staff to establish a bounded universe of tentative program content that is considered both acceptable and feasible. The range of possibilities identified at this meeting should be far broader than the content that could be included in any one program; the universe should remain large enough to leave potential and actual youthful participants in the program with opportunities to make real choices (see below).

As a consequence of groundwork and conversations prior to this meeting, persons developing the program will already have some suggestions at hand for possible program activities. By now they will also know of persons and other resources likely to be available from the community; many of these potential resources will be more suitable for some kinds of content and activities than others. This information can help administrators and other decisionmakers determine the feasibility of various alternatives. The key question, then, becomes, "Of all those that are feasible, what activities will these persons regard as having high educational merit?" Ideally, the answer to this question will be thorough enough to eliminate the need to seek new approval from administrators for information received from the young people during Step 4 and after the program is underway. It will allow those in direct contact with the young people to make sound judgments on the spot concerning what is acceptable and what is not.

This meeting can also be the occasion for obtaining preliminary approval from officials for the selection, recruitment, and evaluation procedures already developed.

4.4.4 Meeting with Young People

Keeping in mind the selection criteria and recruitment procedures to be used (Step 1 above), bring together 10 to 15 young people of approximately the same mix that is expected to participate in the program. This session will determine which program content within the boundaries just established will hold the most appeal for program participants. The group should base their choices on perceived usefulness of various activities, their desires to obtain skills or knowledge in particular areas, and general interest. The young people should indicate what content would hold sufficient appeal to draw them into the program and make them want to stay with it until the end.

The content and activities selected at this point should be specific enough to allow development of instructional materials, arrangements for necessary resources, and preparation of recruitment materials to begin. Within these limitations, some room should be left for actual participants to have a say in the direction their activity will take.

4.4.5 Adding to Evaluation Design Measures of Knowledge and Skills

Add to the evaluation design (Step 2) measures of specific knowledge and skills that participants can be expected to gain, given the content and activities chosen.

4.4.6 Staffing the Program and Finding Supporters

Confer, as necessary, with prospective staff members and supporters in the community to verify that personnel available to the program can adequately handle the content areas chosen during Step 4. If the existing cadre of supporters cannot provide all of the expertise needed, try to fill the gaps. One possibility is to ask a community ally to invite an acquaintance or associate who has the necessary expertise to offer time to the program. For example, if mass communication is central to a content area selected and the present group of supporters does not include a media representative, a merchant in the group can mention the need to the radio or television person who handles his advertising. As a last resort, deleting content that cannot be delivered properly is preferable to asking staff members to "bluff it through" in the classroom.

4.4.7 Negotiating Roles

Based on the content chosen negotiate the roles that individuals in the group of supporters will actually perform when the program is underway. Selection of the school staff member who will have primary responsibility should be confirmed. Adults from the community should agree to become guest participants in the classroom, to provide small numbers of students with job internship experiences, to provide access to their places of business, to collect

evaluation information (see Step 2 above), or to defer direct participation until a program with content more suited to their skills comes around.

4.4.8 Determine Cost

In conference with those selected for direct involvement in the program, compute the additional resources and support that will be needed to deliver the chosen content and to conduct the activities adequately. Desirable support is almost certain to include: (1) Summer pay or released time to permit the primary instructor to develop new materials, (2) time to revise teaching approaches, designs for procedures that will facilitate the day-to-day routines described earlier, creation of reward systems based on incremental achievement possibilities inherent in the content chosen, etc. Other likely costs are those for special equipment and materials, for transportation of youth and adult participants, and for honoraria for the outsiders who provide substantial time or other resources of their own.

4.4.9 Preparing a Proposal

Use the cost estimates just computed to prepare a modest proposal for submission to the school administrators or other funding source. Even if a program can scrape by on donations, it is preferable to assure those involved that at least partial material support for their efforts will be forthcoming. A top priority should be to obtain developmental support for the person primarily responsible for running the program, the one having the most direct contact with participants in and out of the classroom. Lack of preparation time can seriously undermine even a conventional course offering; it may spell disaster for an innovative program.

4.4.10 Preparing Recruitment Materials

Prepare recruitment materials that describe the content and activities to be offered, that identify the school staff members and other adults who will be involved, and that list times and locations of the activities. These materials can consist of written flyers, posters, and outlines for oral presentations. Even though specific representation of a subpopulation of students is intended, all recruitment materials should emphasize that enrollment is open to any interested student. To reiterate, obtaining the desired mix should rely not on the way the program is publicly billed, but on care in choosing the groups to expose most to the information (see Step 1 above).

4.5 Summary

This section has described a sequence of actions intended to culminate in the operation of a self-contained delinquency prevention program in a school.

Initial preparation should include familiarization with program principles and development of a repertoire of possibilities for program content to use in early conversations. The next step is to assess opportunities for action. The assessment stage serves a dual purpose, providing both information about circumstances under which various program efforts will become feasible and presenting the occasion for starting informal negotiations to obtain staff, administrative support, and community cooperation for the project. Following the assessment stage, actions focus expressly on organizing the support already cultivated, on obtaining specific commitments, and on neutralizing resistance. In this and the subsequent stage, the goal is to gradually convert acceptance of abstract program principles into acceptance of the concrete activities the program will include. Movement is toward increasing specificity, leading to agreement on a detailed plan of action, and finally to the actual conducting of a program.

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